

AGRICULTURE - - Veterinarian: Checked TB Epidemic (no tape)

Dr. Michael Sparrow
Youville Residence,
4950 Heather, Vancouver 13.

Interviewed: May 4, 1973.

Born July 7, 1882 at Williscroft, Ontario on farm 100 miles from Toronto.

1897 - to prairies on a "harvest excursion" trip working 3 months on a farm in Manitoba . . . then returned home to school in Ontario.

1903 - returned west to farm briefly in Boissevain then on to British Columbia . . . in Vancouver he operated two teams of horses, excavating work.

1907 - sold out outfit to Merchants Cartage and returned to Ontario . . . attended University of Toronto Veterinary School for 4 years, graduated.

1912 - opened Veterinary practise, corner Burrard and Pender in Vancouver, at Palace Livery stable . . . lots of work with horses and cattle.

1912 - invited by B.C. Government to be one of 5 veterinarians to test dairy cattle for TB . . . he tested in Fraser Valley . . . later checked beef.

1914 - World War 1 started and Dr. Sparrow joined British Army . . . overseas until 1919 . . . has medals from British and King of Italy.

July 1919 - returned to government veterinary service . . . 40 years with contagious diseases . . . bought 50-acre farm No. 3 Road north of Steveston Highway (Wilmar area) . . . had house and barn . . .

22 head Guernsey milk cows . . . set up Wilmar Dairy with certified raw milk . . . dairy had steam and bottling plant . . . hand milking . . . had man delivering raw milk to Vancouver . . . put in drainage on farm.

c1912 - and following years also had horses.

Sold farm . . . resold to Abramson . . . now subdivision of Greczmiel housing.

c.1933 - moved to No. 3 Road - raised horses - registered Clydesdales, Arabian, race horses . . . judged at horse shows - at old Lansdowne Race Track, and Vancouver Drill Hall, Beatty Street 1907 - 08 . . . showed a horse at first P.N.E. . . . hired couple Mr. and Mrs. McIntyre to look after horses at his farm . . . winters Dave Diamond's race horses on his farm.

Later bought house on Deagle Road, west of No. 3, near Steveston Highway . . . wife died.

T.B. Tests on Animals

Made clinical examination . . . injected tuberculine solution into animal . . . 24 to 50 hours later took second reading . . . swelling appeared at seat of injection indicated T.B. . . . intradermal test . . . if any doubt second test made, thermal test . . . temperature taken before and after injection of tuberculine serum . . . affected animal showed temperature rise.

After first year of testing - 35% of animals in Fraser Valley proved tuberculine . . . tests for T.B. continued . . . every day fewer animals showed T.B. . . . none today.

- Disposal of T.B. animals - taken to nearest abbatoir if one near enough . . . for Richmond area this was Swift's, Marine Drive.

Animals destroyed under Federal Government inspection . . .
disease confined to lymphic gland on some animals . . . all hides
salvaged for leather.

Payment. Federal Government paid 50% of value of animal to
farmer.

Clean Up. All feed troughs, stables, mangers cleaned in strong
solution of Gillett Lye followed by a white wash lime . . . there
is no time period before cattle can again be brought into the
barns.

Follow-up tests for T.B. are conducted on all farms . . . until
no disease recurrence proven . . . it is thought the T.B. cattle
came to B.C. from Ontario.

B.C. was first province in Canada to request and establish
compulsory T.B. testing of cattle . . . usually children of T.B.
cattle farmers were affected.

Other Diseases

Blackleg on range cattle
Anthrax
Haemorrhagic septemia (contagious blood poisoning)
Foot Rot
Liver fluke in sheep

Vaccination now controls many of these diseases.

When Dr. Sparrow first moved to Richmond (1919) water available

through:

1. rain water from roof
2. drinking water: 40 gals. barrel
3. wells dug for cattle

1903 - took C.P.R. train Vancouver to Steveston . . . got off at
Brighthouse station . . . went to Jack Featherstone farm for 12 tons
of hay . . . fed teams of horses . . . recalls everyone lived near
dyke . . . few people in middle of Lulu Island . . . peat came

up to No. 3 Road . . . Vancouver people rode on benches on flat cars of C.P.R. train to attend races at Brighthouse Race Track.

Earliest veterinary duties in Fraser Valley testing cattle for TB. were either on horseback or horse and buggy transportation . . . at Cloverdale he stayed at the hotel, hired a livery horse to go forth during week in district . . . lots of stables then . . . 3 stables in Marpole . . . 2 stables in Ladner . . . neighborly attitude when visiting the ranches, months away from home.

He would like to relive his last 60 years. Took a course in horse judging . . . judged horses at P.N.E. until one year ago . . . has picture of self driving 6 horse team in 1972 at P.N.E.

Membership

Held in:- Vancouver Pioneers Association (must have lived in Vancouver before 1903).

- Bruce Boys Association (dinner in Badminton Hotel, Vancouver 1907).
- Honorary member B.C. Veterinary Medical Association.
- has Italian Medal of Honor from King of Italy.

Daughter Mrs. Owen Scouler (Marion) and late son William.

D. Cleland